



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information Contact:
Michelle Feist
Division of Disease Control
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: mafeist@nd.gov

State Health Department Reports Second West Nile Virus-Related Death *North Dakotans Urged To Take Precautions This Holiday Weekend*

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced the state's second West Nile virus-related death in 2007, according to Senior Epidemiologist and West Nile Virus program manager Tracy Miller.

The individual was a resident of northwestern North Dakota who died while hospitalized. The man was older than 60 and had underlying medical conditions.

“This death is an unfortunate reminder that although the weather is starting to become cooler, mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus are still out there.” Miller said. “While the risk of serious illness to most people is low, I urge residents to continue to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and this virus.”

According to Michelle Feist, West Nile virus surveillance coordinator for the Department of Health, West Nile virus is found throughout the state. “As people participate in upcoming outdoor fall activities such as school sporting events, Labor Day celebrations, hunting and the upcoming United Tribes International Powwow, it is still important for everyone, participants and spectators alike, to continue to take precautions,” said Feist.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus, the state health department recommends the following protective measures:

- Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved insect repellent (Read all instructions carefully).
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are likely to bite.

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@state.nd.us

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when possible.
- Eliminate standing water around homes (e.g., buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths).
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed.

The following is a summary of West Nile virus activity in North Dakota to date:

- Human cases – 152; Total human samples tested – 1107
- Positive birds – 9; total birds tested – 15
- Positive horses – 4; total horses tested – 16
- Positive mosquito pools – 4; total mosquito pools tested – 36
- Total – 45 of the 53 counties in North Dakota have identified West Nile virus activity.

The Department of Health's West Nile virus website, www.ndhealth.gov/wnv, will continue to be updated each Wednesday with new human, horse, bird and mosquito case information.

For additional information about West Nile virus, including free educational materials, visit www.ndhealth.gov/wnv or contact Michelle Feist, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

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